



Ref. 4

DEPARTMENT of HEALTH  
and HUMAN SERVICES

Portfolio Services  
GPO Box 125B  
Hobart Tasmania 7001

File reference: FOI 35/2005  
Contact Officer: Ann Bower  
Telephone: 03/62333089  
Facsimile: 03/62334946  
E-Mail: [REDACTED]@dhhs.tas.gov.au

13 April 2005

Mrs Poppy Lopatniuk  
[REDACTED]

**BELLERIVE TAS 7018**

Dear Mrs Lopatniuk

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

I refer to your request received in this Department on 18 March 2005 seeking under the provisions of the Tasmanian Freedom of Information Act 1991, a copy of the incidence of Craniopharyngloma in Tasmania from 1998-2005 and the incidence of Teratoma cancer in Tasmania per year from 1970-1990.

#### **1. Incidence of teratoma cancer in Tasmania per year from 1970-1990.**

The Agency does not have information on the incidence of cancers prior to 1978. The Tasmanian Cancer Registry only began to register cancer cases from 1978 onwards, therefore data for teratoma cancer is not available prior to 1978 as it has not been collected. This advice is provided to you in accordance with the provisions of Section 22 of the Act – Information not in possession of the Agency.

The number of new cases of teratoma cancer per year is very small and could result in patient identification if the data is released. In accordance with Section 30 of the Act – Information Affecting Personal Privacy – the agency is unable to release the information in relation to the incidence of teratoma cancer per year in full.

Section 30 of the Act provides that "*information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information relating to the personal affairs of a person*".

However, the Agency is able to release some information on teratoma cancer by combining the number of new teratoma cancer cases for their period 1978-1990.

As show in the table below, from 1978-1990 the Tasmanian Cancer Registry registered a total of 25 new cases of diagnosed teratoma cancer in Tasmania.

**Number of New Cases of Teratoma Cancer (ICDO3 Morphology 90803) Diagnosed in Tasmania 1978-1990**

Years of Diagnosis	Total Number of New Cases
1978-1990	25

The information that has been released, has been derived from the cancer database administered by the Tasmanian Cancer Registry under the auspices of the Menzies Centre (University of Tasmania).

**2. Incidence of craniopharyngioma in Tasmania from 1998-2005**

The Agency seeks to totally exempt all information on the incidence of craniopharyngioma under the provisions of Section 22 of the Act – Information not in the possession of the Agency and Section 30 of the Act – Information affecting personal privacy.

**Statement of Reasons:**

The Agency does not have information on the incidence of cancers post 2002. Due to the large number of cancer cases that need to be registered and updated by the Tasmanian Cancer Registry each year, with up to one third of cases requiring follow-up to validate the cancer diagnosis, registration of new cancer cases are currently only available only up to the year 2002. Data for 2003 for example, will be available at the end of 2005.

Craniopharyngioma is a rare condition and classified as a benign (non-cancerous) tumour in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD03 morphology 93501). Prior to May 2003, craniopharyngioma was not a notifiable disease, and cancer registries in Australia were not required to collect data on craniopharyngioma. Consequently, any records held on craniopharyngioma up to May 2003 are potentially incomplete, and therefore unreliable in determining the incidence of craniopharyngioma in Tasmania.

The number of cases of craniopharyngioma that have been voluntarily reported to and registered by the Tasmanian Cancer Registry from 1998-2002 are extremely small. In addition to the data being unreliable, public release of the data could potentially compromise patient confidentiality, as the number of cases registered is too small. Consequently the Agency is unable to release this information.

The decision in respect to your application was made by Roscoe Taylor, Director Public Health.

You have the right under Section 47 of the Tasmanian Freedom of Information Act 1991 to appeal for a review of this decision. To seek a review, you must apply in writing to the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services at the above address within 28 days of receiving this notice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Bower', written in a cursive style.

Ann Bower  
**FOI COORDINATOR**